

The Bromeliad Blade

Newsletter of the
San Diego
Bromeliad Society

March 2016

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NUMBER 3

The President's Corner

by Robert Kopfstein

Could it be that the family bromeliaceae is about to come into its own? Is it a possibility that people will cease to mispronounce bromeliad? Are we perhaps at the dawning of the age of Aquarius?

Not long ago I spoke with a gentleman who used to own, and now manages, WaterWise Succulents, a large nursery off I-15 in Fallbrook. Currently the nursery is owned by Altman Growers, a multi-million-dollar operation.

Tom, the manager, told me that he has been in the business of growing cactus and succulents commercially for 30 years. When he first started, apparently you could hardly give these plants away, and now they are not just a hot item, they are sizzling. Everyone seems to want them in their landscape, and the landscape designers cannot seem to get enough of them.

Of course our recent drought in California has also spurred people into thinking outside the box of roses, lawn and geraniums. But likely there is more to this phenomenon than meets the eye.

For many people cactus and succulents represent a flora that is unusual, different, exotic. Their shapes, their colors, their flowers offer an alternative to the same old palette that comprises their gardens.

So what does this have to do with bromeliads?

Tom was interested in speaking to me because he is convinced that the next plant craze is going to be bromeliads. He has already begun amassing an inventory of mother plants for commercial scale propagations.

He is in touch with many landscape designers who feel that the bromeliad family offers features similar to those of cactus and succulents.

Bromeliads are exotic. They come from distant lands, rainforests and deserts; it seems that plants close to home are taken for granted. Note how hard a sell it is to convince people to landscape with California natives.

Bromeliads are also water wise. They can require far less irrigation

than roses, begonias, iris, most shrubs and trees, depending on which ones you use and how you plant them.

Bromeliads are diverse. They can be epiphytic, requiring no soil, a plus for someone who grows a garden on a porch or small patio. They can be terrestrial—perfect companion plants for cactus and succulents.

Bromeliads are plagued by few pests. You cannot say the same for roses and orchids.

Bromeliads are affordable. My garden has a number of cycads, mostly small specimens because I cannot afford larger specimens (which can cost many hundreds, even thousands of dollars). This is definitely not the situation with bromeliads.

For someone who wishes to create an interesting, even unique garden, using bromeliads as part of the fabric of the design is the way to go.

Personally, I am hoping that Tom is right.

Elmer Lorenz

February 20, 1914 - Feb. 17, 2016

by Robert Kopfstein

Elmer Lorenz was the last surviving member of a group of plant enthusiasts who in 1950 founded the Bromeliad Society International at the home and garden of Frank Overton in Glendale, California. Also in attendance at that meeting were Victoria Padilla, and special guest Mulford Foster, who flew out specially for the occasion.

Elmer's interests were not only in bromeliads (he had a collection of thousands) but in begonias, anthuriums, orchids, philodendrons, and other tropical/sub-tropical species.

He was president of BSI as well as the Southern California Horticultural

Society, and he also belonged to Leafeaters, whose membership included Mildred Mathias of UCLA and designer Midge Davis along with a host of other horticultural notables.

In 1950 he and his wife bought a one acre piece of land, barren except for the newly constructed house that sat on it. Over the next 65 years Elmer created a rainforest garden, so thick with vegetation that you had to weave snakelike through the tangle—Elmer discouraged the use of machetes in his garden.

Elmer's botanical library consisted of many hundreds (thousands?) of books and journals that he amassed over 70 years. Last year he donated them to the San Diego Botanic Garden: they filled 165 boxes.

My favorite memory of Elmer was when he came to judge a San Diego

Bromeliad Society show. At the time I was a student judge. During the three hours that we spent on the same judging team, I learned more about judging bromeliads than everything I had learned in all of the judging classes combined.

Elmer, you were really a gift to the world of plants, and your kindness and wisdom will be missed.



February Meeting

The February meeting theme was cultivation. Our members Andrew Wilson and Dan Kinnard shared a little bit of their practical knowledge.

While both have in common the years of experience, their approach to growing is very different. Dan cultivates spotless bromeliads in his shade house in Vista. Andrew's broms live outdoors in the garden. Their presentations highlight the importance of adapting techniques to the particular growing conditions at hand. Andrew talked about the many different ways one can grow bromeliads that don't involve a potted plant.

Dan showed a variety of potting mixes and explained how he came up with his ideal mix – 90% lava rock to 10% bark.

February's Opportunity Table

Featured bromeliads from Justin Allen's collection. Justin is moving to the Philippines and is offering his lovely bromeliad collection for sale. It was a great chance to acquire awesome broms that didn't come from a nursery greenhouse.



Show and Tell

Thanks to Don Nelson for bringing in the new black poster board. Our broms look better than ever!

Grown by Bob Wright

Hechtia guatemalensis hybrid
Aechmea Bert
Aechmea Black on Black



Hechtia guatemalensis hybrid

Grown by Andy Siekkinen

Hechtia Rosea
Deuterocohnia breviflora x lotteae
Tillandsia xiioides large form
Tillandsia tectorum
Aechmea Red Dragon
Billbergia Strawberry
Billbergia Erotica
Billbergia vittata
Aechmea nudicaulis var. aureo-rosea



Tillandsia tectorum

Grown by Joanne Dossett

Tillandsia (aeranthos?) pig topiary



And More...

Tillandsia cacticola x purpurea – Dave Kennedy
Billbergia nutans – Don Nelson
Dychia estevesii hybrid – Bob Kopfstein



Water Conservation Rebate Programs

Here's an important heads-up by suggestion of Nancy Groves in the February meeting:

SoCal Water Smart offers \$75 rebates for rain barrels purchased. The guidelines are at socalwatersmart.com.

The City of San Diego also offers rebates of up to \$1.00 per gallon of barrel storage for rain barrel rebates up to 400 gallons per property for city of San Diego customers only. Info is at

<http://www.sandiego.gov/water/conservation/rebates/rainbarrel.shtml>.

City residents can qualify for both rebates.

SDBS 2016

Officers

President

Robert Kopfstein

rwkopfstein@gmail.com

760-726-8300

1st Vice-President (programs)

OPEN

2nd Vice-President (plants)

David Kennedy

thedavekennedy@gmail.com

858-278-6532

Secretary

Ruth Contino

ruth.contino@baesystems.com

619-303-2144

Treasurer

Al Evans, Jr.

alevans001@earthlink.net

858-492-9866

Newsletter Editor

Juliana Raposo

julianadrapposo@gmail.com

858-349-1405

Past President

Robert Vitacco

rvittacco@cox.net

Board Members

Scott Sandel (2014-2015)

sandel-marich@cox.net

619-325-1990 x 110

Nancy Groves (2014-2015)

nancygroves@me.com

858-453-6486

Lucia Velazquez (2014-2015)

luciavmaccanna@yahoo.com

619-283-0500

Bob Walters (2014-2015)

cactusbobby@gmail.com

619-282-2246

March Meeting

Will feature a presentation by SDBS member Pam Koide-Hyatt from Birdrock Tropicals.

Last April Pam was a speaker at Bromsmatta, hosted by the Bromeliad Society of Australia in Sydney. After the conference she went to visit a few of the growers and hybridizers in Brisbane. She then went to Singapore and presented two programs there.

In this presentation Pam will show the different ways that Tillandsia hybridizers in the Brisbane area grow and propagate their plants and collections. She will then show how some of the hobbyists are growing their collections in Singapore.

Finally, Pam will discuss the Gardens By the Bay, the large nature park spanning 101 hectares on reclaimed land adjacent to the Marina.

Opportunity Table

by David Kennedy

This month the opportunity table will be furnished by our speaker, Pamela Koide Hyatt, the well-known (and renowned) owner of Bird Rock Tropicals. Pam will bring an assortment of great tillandsias for the plant table, and she will also have some swell collectible-types for individual sale. The club will add a few 'big gnarly' for good measure. And there will be an auction of an excellent Orthophytum lemei as well as a mounted T. tectorum clump; both are wonderful remnants from the massive Margaret Case donation from a few years back.

SDBS MEETINGS

Meetings are held at 10 AM on the second Saturday of each month at Balboa Park, Casa Del Prado, Room 104.

San Diego Bromeliad Society Webpage

www.bsi.org/webpages/san_diego.html

THE BROMELIAD BLADE

San Diego Bromeliad Society
Juliana Raposo, Editor

6979 Sweetwater St
Carlsbad, CA 92011

858-349-1405

To send material for the newsletter, please contact Juliana at julianadrapposo@gmail.com

Make sure to submit your contribution before the 20th of the month for inclusion in the next newsletter.

2016 SDBS Membership

It's that time of the year again!

To renew your membership, please contact Al Evans, Treasurer
alevans001@earthlink.net
858-492-9866

Renewal Fees: 1 year

<p>Single email \$13 Dual email \$17 Single USPS \$28 Dual USPS \$32</p>
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Renewal Fees: 2 years

<p>Single email \$22 Dual email \$30 Single USPS \$52 Dual USPS \$60</p>
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Couldn't Show and Tell

by David Kennedy

When most club members talk about "companion plants", they usually refer to non-bromeliads like orchids or succulents. I have no room or inclination to follow suit, although I admire the diversity of so many of your gardens.

But for me, a companion plant is a big tillandsia sheltering a smaller, more photo-sensitive one, as depicted by my soon-to-bloom *T. grandis* that shades a "giant" *bulbosa*, which is also ready to flower.



Detail of t. bulbosa next to t. grandis

On another front, what to do when a potential "Show" plant clump only sends up one inflorescence? I recently used the old trick of placing an apple near the lazy plants in hopes of instigating budding. The ethylene gas emitted by apples will ripen most anything, and is said to work at inducing blooms. So, will my *T. "El Dimmitt Doble"* have all four spikes in time? Come to the Show and find out!



Finally, is there anything more gratifying than new pups? On the left is *T. streptophylla x chiapensis*, while the right-side plant is *T. tomasellii*.



*Green fingers
are the
extension of a
verdant heart.*



A Visit to Andrew Wilson's Garden



Whoever watched Andrew Wilson's presentation in the February meeting went home wondering about what his garden looked like. I went there and saw a fantastic collection that reflects a broad interest in not only bromeliads, but trees, cacti, orchids, South-African plants; in a sprawling area which is actually a patchwork of delightful smaller gardens.

Perched atop a hill and surrounded by native vegetation, lies a private botanic garden with a view to the Delmar Fairgrounds. The climate is just right for broms, with cooler coastal temps, ocean breezes and extra moisture from the marine layer. Andrew started planting trees in the property in the 70s. Some are now giants which were planted from seed. Part of the charm of the garden comes from how established it actually is.

Spring came early this year, signaled by beds of *Billbergia* blooming in February, wherever you looked: under the trees, over the trees, in hanging baskets, sunny or shaded. The mass bloom of Andrew's billbergias was certainly the highlight of the visit. You think your 3 plant clump looks cool, you should see his stuff.

We started the tour in a courtyard where he grows a variety of xeric plants and incredibly massive clumps of *dendrobium speciosum*. These plants make a statement as they are clearly decades old. Then, there's a dry forest -- short, branching trees housing the motherlode of tillandsia within the canopy. Andrew chooses his trees carefully to find the perfect fit for this or that bromeliad. The canopy must let in the right amount of sunlight, the tree's leaves must not drop all at once and must be light

Upcoming Events

Highlighted Meetings

March 12, 2016 at 10 AM
San Diego Bromeliad Society
Balboa Park, Casa Del Prado, Room 104
Our own Pam Koide-Hyatt presenting:
Tillandsia Hybridizers and Collections in
Australia and Singapore
www.bsi.org/webpages/san_diego.html

April 9, 2016 at 10 AM
San Diego Bromeliad Society
Balboa Park, Casa Del Prado, Room 104
www.bsi.org/webpages/san_diego.html

June 13 – 19, 2016
Bromeliad Society International World
Conference
Houston, Texas
www.bsi.org/webpages/san_diego.html

Monthly Meetings

1st Tuesday, 6:30 PM
San Diego Orchid Society
Balboa Park, Casa Del Prado, Room
101
www.sdorchids.com

2nd Saturday, 10 AM
San Diego Bromeliad Society
Balboa Park, Casa Del Prado, Room
104
www.bsi.org/webpages/san_diego.html

2nd Saturday, 1 PM
San Diego Cactus and Succulent Society
Balboa Park, Casa Del Prado, Room
101
www.sdcss.net

2nd Monday, 5 PM
San Diego Horticultural Society
Surfside Race Place at the Delmar
Fairgrounds
www.sandiegohorticulturalsociety.org

weight as to not clog the bromeliads. He will match the right size and shape of tree to facilitate the display and care of the resident broms - everything is carefully orchestrated. This kind of planning also helps managing a huge bromeliad collection a lot easier.

Some of his Tillandsia take an incredible amount of sun, full sun. Check out this tall tree stump inhabited by a robust clumps of tillandsia tectorum and aeranthis high up in the blue sky.



Moving on away from the house, there is a small bench area with shade cloth, mostly for tending to work-in-progress plants.

Next to the house, the main feature is a titanic coral tree which is home to a community of tank bromeliads. Its wide horizontal branches sport hefty clumps of billbergias, neoregelias and tillandsia. Despite the size of the tree, the open canopy lets in the right amount of flickering sunlight to make the bromeliads happy. The shaded areas on the ground down below is a haven for foliage vrieseas; it is moist, lush and colorful. I was pleased to see the broms actually planted on the

ground -- a feat of courage, considering the higher risk of rot that vrieseas are known for. But the vrieseas are happy, and amongst them a cute blooming sedum



Billbergias blooming on the coral tree. The "pot" is a dead platygerium.

groundcover happily grows.

Walk down the slope and you'll find an oversized dog pen. It is in fact so large it could've been used for horses! But the feature of interest is the chicken wire fence: it is completely dressed in tillandsias. All shapes and sizes of tillys are growing into the wire or mounted on cork but always dressed in a good clump of t. usneoides. We went around the pen looking for tillandsia in bloom and found many.

Further down is another dry garden with cacti, succulents, dyckias, hechtias and puyas. Some giant

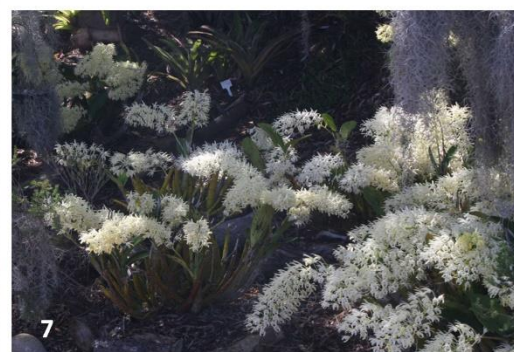
alcantareas are being started in tree stumps, following the loss of the recent bloomed plants that Andrew just replaced.

Now we go up again, and another area shows a floriferous group of short trees and aloe where humming birds are hanging out. Little pops of color are everywhere. This area shelters a combination of orchids and tillys on the tree branches plus a bed of blooming Aechmea weilbachii and other colorful broms on the ground.

The area by the east side of the house is probably the moistest and shadiest. Amongst a thousand things to see, a floating chandelier of neo

fluminensis captured the attention. It was backlit by the sunlight and framed in endless beards of t. usneoides. Many more colorful neos, orchids and aechmeas are thriving in the canopy. The upward slope facing the house is outfitted with mini terraces that house clumps of colorful broms. This setup offers optimal viewing of the plants and should be copied by all of us!

I think the best feature of Andrews garden is its effortless beauty. Thanks to an understanding of microclimates and ingenuous plant placement, the plants are able to help themselves.



1. Bromeliad terraces 2. Need name 3. Vriesea hybrid by John Arden 4. Aechmea weilbachii 5. Tillandsia stricta 'Houston' 6. Billbergias 7. Dendrobium speciosum cloud 8. Keeping organized with clever labeling: a stone with a label stays in place.

Interview with Andrew Wilson

How did you become interested in growing bromeliads?

After seeing them in a trip to Argentina and Chile 8 years ago.

Why do you garden?

It's a better way of getting exercise and more fun than going to a sweaty gym. Also, I like the challenge of getting plants to grow.

Tell me again that story about getting 3 of each plant and what to do next.

It is an old saying. When you get a special plant for your garden get three of them. Plant the first one where you think it will grow. Plant the second where your friends say it will grow. Plant the third where nobody says it will grow. I give you one guess as to which turns out to be the right choice.

Your garden is large and complex. Did you start with a plan?

No. A garden is not like a painting or a building. It develops with time. The French built great planned gardens like Versailles. Great, but like other planned gardens they are static and boring.



Andrew in the garden

How do you water all these plants?

I planted many trees years ago. Today you see only the survivors. They are never watered, except by rain. Their survival provides, through wind blockage and leaf drip humidity at night, an environment that reduces the watering greatly. With bromeliads the technique works well because they accept and enjoy tree-shaded areas. In unshaded areas I grow succulents and plants from droughty areas (one dry season per year) primarily from Australia, South Africa and California. These get watered only in their growth season. As before, you see only the survivors.

Neoregelia fluminensis chandelier



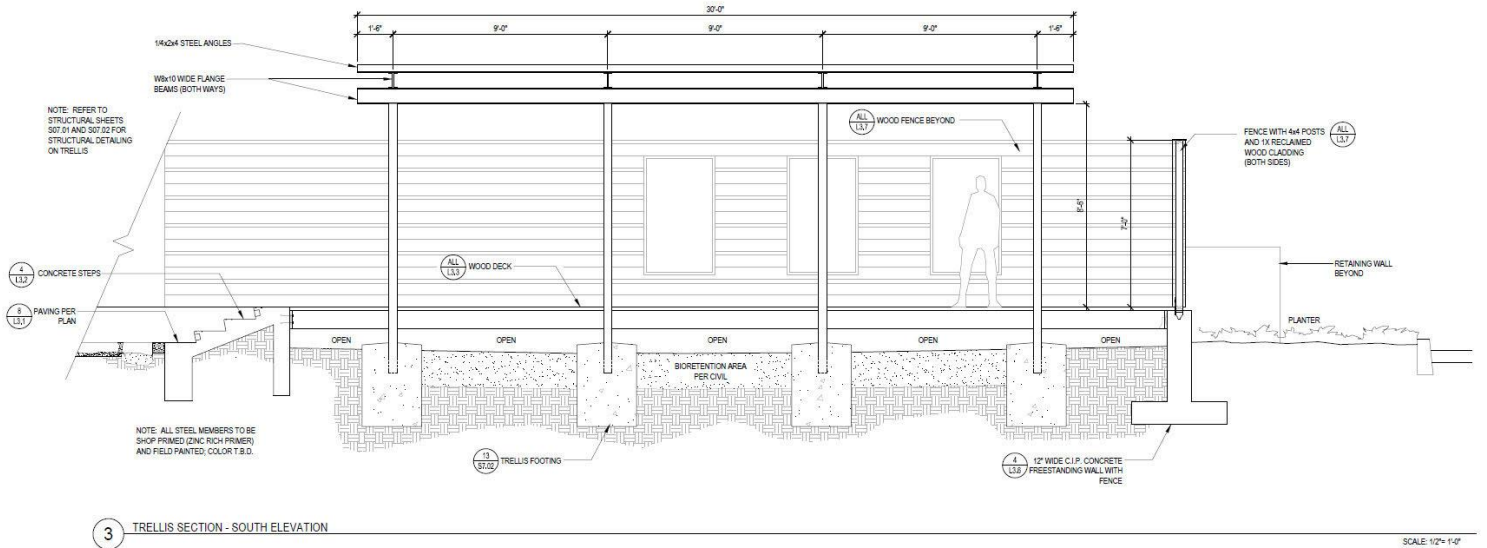
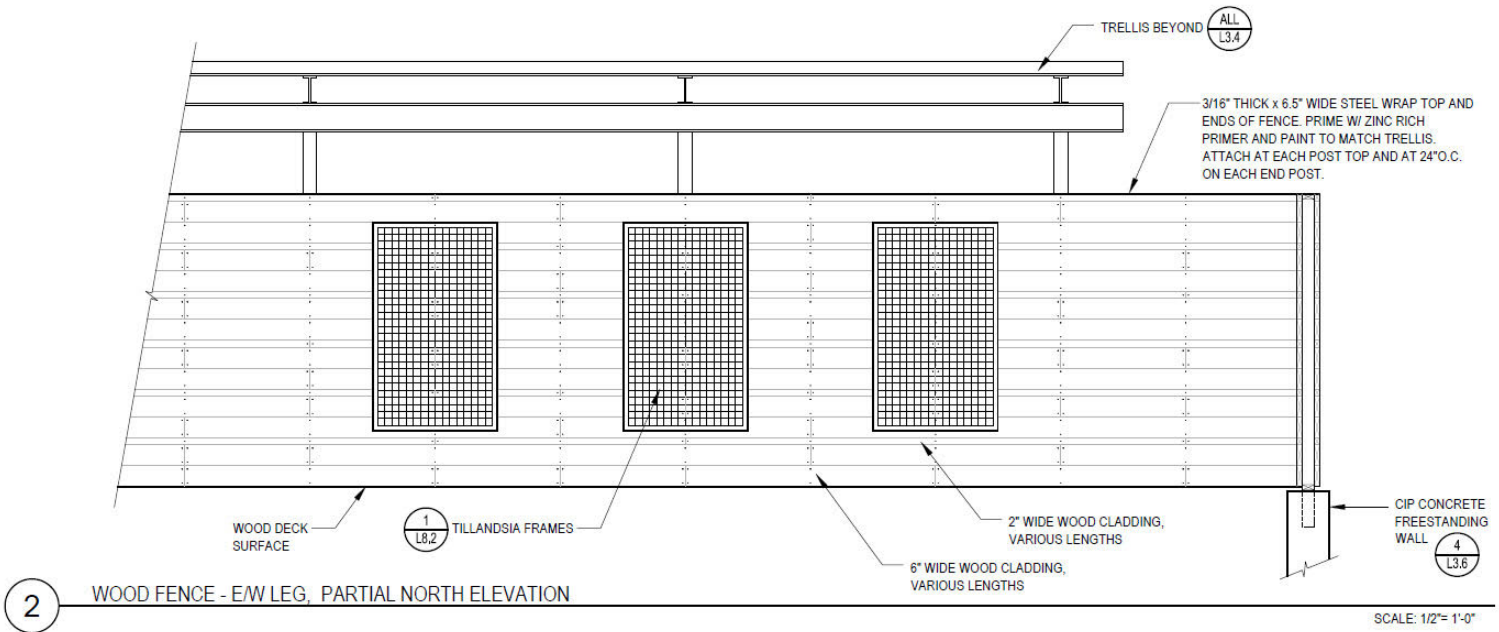
Tillandsias in the landscape

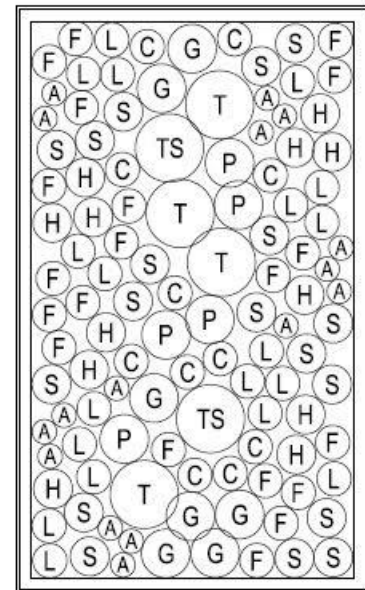
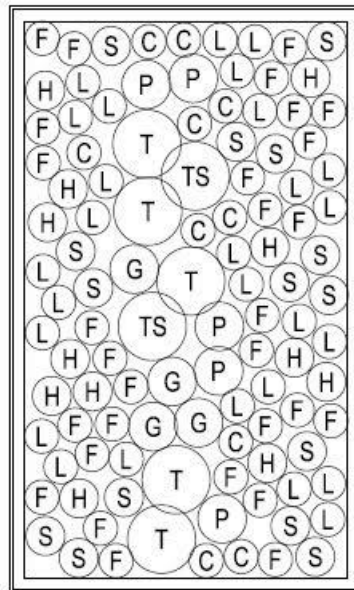
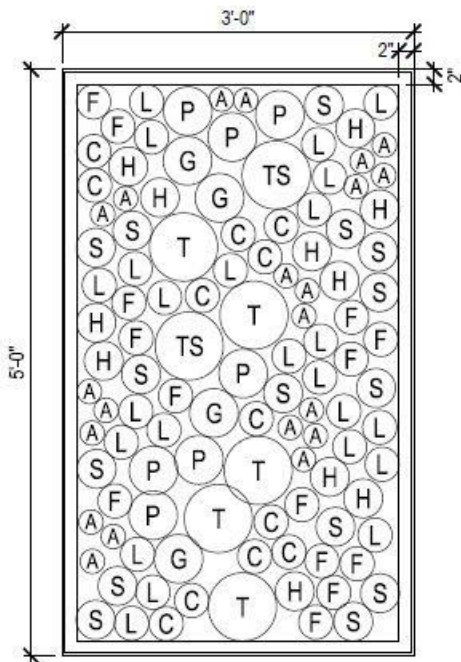
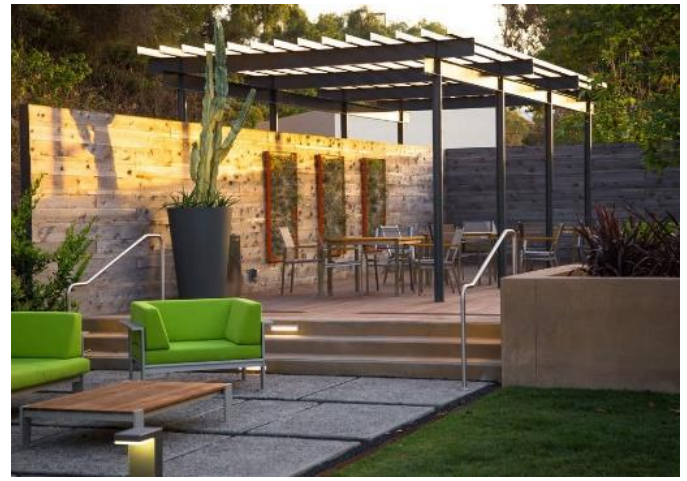
by Scott Sandel

Last year, we finished a job that has a series of office amenity areas for a creative tech company. Where we had a dining area, we used reclaimed barn siding to screen out views of an ugly slope. We designed some bright

orange custom Tillandsia panels that we hung on the wall. We got Airplantman to create the custom plant frames. You can go to his website to get ideas for modern-styled Tillandsia displays.

<http://airplantman.myshopify.com/collections/all>





PLANT LEGEND

- | | |
|--|--|
| (A) TILLANDSIA ALBERTIANA | (L) TILLANDSIA LEONAMIANA "LARGE" |
| (C) TILLANDSIA CAERULEA | (P) TILLANDSIA PALEACEA "GIANT FORM" |
| (F) TILLANDSIA FUCHSII (NOT T. FUCHSIA GRACILIS) | (S) TILLANDSIA SCHIEDEANA 'MAJOR' ("EXTRA LARGE" CLUMPS) |
| (G) TILLANDSIA GARDNERI V. RUPICOLA | (T) TILLANDSIA TECTORUM "EXTRA LARGE" |
| (H) TILLANDSIA 'HOUSTON' OR STRICTA "5-INCH" | (TS) TILLANDSIA TECTORUM "SPECIMEN" |

NOTES:

1. STEEL TILLANDSIA FRAMES SHLALL DELIEVERED TO THE SITE PRE-PLANTED BY AIR PLANT MAN. AIRPLANTMAN DESIGNS, (310) 382-6351
2. FRAME COLOR NOTED IN SITE FURNISHINGS SCHEDULE ON SHEET L6.3.
3. MOUNTING OF FRAMES WITH Z CLEATS NOT BY AIRPLANTMAN. REFER TO DETAIL 3/L3.7 FOR MORE INFO.
4. ALL PLANTS BY AIRPLANT MAN SHALL BE "MEDIUM" SIZE OR LARGER, AS OFFERED BY RAINFOREST FLORA (CARSON, CA AND BONSAI, CA) OR TILLANDSIA INTERNATIONAL (COARSEGOLD, CA). PLANT SIZES IN "QUOTES" AVAILABLE FROM RAINFOREST FLORA.

1

TILLANDSIA PLANTING LAYOUT

1" = 1'-0"